



BIUST, CIPA SYMBIOTIC UNION FOCUS ON ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION

By: Tshegofatso Teseletso

The Companies and Intellectual Property Authority (CIPA) joined a host of key industry players that partnered with the Botswana International University of Science and Technology (BIUST) through a Memorandum of Understanding, which advances the latter's endeavour to lead the national economic transformation from mineral-based to a knowledge-based economy.

CIPA delegate, led by the Registrar General Mr Conductor Paul Masena, recently descended the university for the signing of the MoU.

On behalf of the BIUST community, Professor Otlogetswe Totolo extended his warmest welcome to the CIPA delegation. He defined the BIUST-CIPA partnership as an inevitable, natural and symbiotic relationship.

He stated that the union between the duo was a natural occurrence as CIPA has a mandate to protect intellectual property rights in Botswana while BIUST is a public research institution with a mandate to generate knowledge that could facilitate the economic transformation of our country through academic investigations.

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EDITORIAL TEAM

Mr. Keaogile Rafifing
Ms. Ditapole Chibua-Tsheboeng
Mrs. Rebecca Baruti-Richard
Ms. Wandipa Gachala

REPORTERS

Ms. Gofaone Motswagole
Ms. Tshegofatso Teseletso



Rebecca Baruti-Richard

EDITOR'S NOTE



The beginning of a new financial year accords every individual a clean slate to do things differently and attain the University mandate. It therefore calls for the new beginnings, fresh initiatives and ideas. Welcome to the first edition of the year 2021/2022 in which we endure to strive to gather and bring news on what is happening in our University.

In this issue, in a bid to establish a cooperative framework that can support the Government's effort in poverty eradication across the country, BIUST recently joined hands with MOPAGPA. The University's highlight was when it launched the Statistics Service Unit, which offers statistical analysis and data science capacity by providing advice and technical services within the University and beyond. Dr Lebele continues to advocate for libraries as core to development in the region through Sub-Saharan IFLA Regional Division Committee.

Colleagues if you want to be part of this newsletter please forward your information to barutir@biust.ac.bw or gachalaw@biust.ac.bw.

The editorial team urges you to continue adhering to COVID-19 health protocols and staying safe.

"Our coming together under the guidance of the memorandums of understanding (MoU) which we are gathered here to sign represents a motivation to work together to advance our national interest to create a safe and secure ideation platform that can help in the translation of our research into tangible products," Prof Totolo said in his remarks.

He elucidated that as Botswana's economy was transforming from a resource-based to a knowledge-based economy, public research institutions like BIUST are expected to play a key leading role in the generation of new knowledge and ideas which could be patented and copyrighted as intellectual property. "When the Environment for research is safe and secure, it can generate the comforts that can stimulate innovation," he said.

He added that the ambit of the signed MoU was wide as it touches very critical areas of collaboration that are key to stimulating innovation and advancing research in Botswana.

"This MoU reflects the intent of the two parties to work as one in the development and implementation of capacity building initiatives that will empower researchers, innovators as well as the public at the largest; to come up with new ideas that would support and feed Botswana's economic development."

The collaboration between BIUST and CIPA, he continued, must be viewed as a springboard that will support a complete interaction cycle focused on encouraging the research intuition and providing the necessary safety of your local intellectual property.

In addition, the vice-chancellor indicated that the knowledge the institution generated in their laboratories must be transformed into market goods and services that are properly packaged and confirmed.

At the end of his opening remarks, he reiterated their commitment to work with CIPA and other like-minded stakeholders to advance the prosperity aspirations of Botswana. "This signing ceremony is just the beginning of a very long journey which we must strive to punctuate with success to success at every step of the way; our complementary strengths and opportunities shall carry us into a better future for our country," he concluded.

For his part, the CIPA's Registrar General Mr Masena applauded BIUST for successfully positioning itself as one of Botswana's leading centres of research and for producing industry-ready graduates who are more than equipped to shop and lead Botswana's transformation to a vibrant, dynamic, inclusive, and diversified economy.

Masena illuminated that one of their current strategic intent was to unlock value in the economy through stimulating innovation and providing IP tools to protect innovation and creativity and enter meaningful collaboration to ensure that those innovations are fully commercialized. "It is for this reason that we at CIPA are very eager to collaborate with BIUST," he said.

The Registrar General noted that this MoU will enable both CIPA and BIUST to create an ecosystem where innovative ideas are incubated, protected, and developed into sustainable, a viable enterprise that will contribute to employment creation and poverty eradication, economic growth, and development. He further clarified that through this MoU, CIPA will ensure that the entire BIUST community, including students, lecturers, and researchers are capacitated on intellectual property rights and management.

"We intend to ensure that all intellectual property rights generated in the university are fully registered and that the university has a fit for purpose intellectual property policy that encourages and rewards creativity and innovation," he said, adding that a team of intellectual property experts will be fully availed to the university as and when needed.

He said as the representative of Botswana at both the World Intellectual Property Organisation and the African Regional Intellectual Property Organization, CIPA will ensure that the BIUST students and innovators have full access to training and capacity-building initiatives offered by the intellectual property organisations.

"I wish to now and here commit CIPA to award a prize to one student during the annual BIUST graduation," Masena said. He stated that the winning student should have demonstrated throughout their studies, the potential to develop patentable products that can be commercialised. CIPA's registrar general indicated that this step was one of their initiatives to stimulate innovation within the BIUST community.

Mr Masena said he was looking forward to the successful implementation of the union and was confident that two years from now, this partnership would bear testament to a massive impact on our society and the diversification of our economy.

Giving the vote of thanks, BIUST Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research Development and Innovation Prof. Abraham Atta Ogwu defined the event as significant because it was impossible to do industrialization without commercialization of the knowledge hence the need for protection of the commercialized knowledge. He accentuated that the partnership would assist in curbing and preventing knowledge pouching and help Botswana to succeed in moving towards a knowledge-based economy.



BIUST OFFICIALLY INAUGURATE STATISTICAL SERVICES UNIT (SSU)

On the 22nd of March 2022, Botswana International University of Science and Technology through the Faculty of Science, Department of Mathematics, and Statistical Sciences launched the Statistics Service Unit (SSU). The virtual event was held under the theme "Statistical Collaboration for a Knowledge-Based Economy and Sustainable Development." SSU is a consulting unit within the Department of Mathematics and Statistical Sciences, Faculty of Sciences. It aims to create a BIUST statistical analysis and data science capacity by providing advice and technical services within the University and beyond. The initiative is available to the BIUST community, the general public, and organizations.

When officially opening the inauguration the Acting BIUST Vice Chancellor Prof. Elisha Shemang delineated that the launch aimed at creating a BIUST statistical analysis and data science capacity by providing advice and technical services within the university. Those technical services include but are not limited to; statistical analysis and collaboration skills short courses training. Prof. Shemang indicated that this initiative also focuses on fostering mutually beneficial contacts between the University and the wider community in dealing with real-world issues critically and robustly.

In addition, Prof. Shemang depicted that unit SSU was established to serve as a capacity-building mechanism to help address the challenges identified within the BIUST research groups, parastatal, private sector, as well as regional and global communities. He further expressed that setting up the unit also fitted well within the BIUST strategy roadmap since it would address the knowledge deficiency through the provision of advice and technical services within the University and beyond.

Prof. Shemang unraveled that postgraduate Students would from time-to-time form part of the Consultancy as part of their learning and skills development in Consulting. This would enhance self-employment and job creation in their future aspirations. "Today's launch of SSU is to ensure that BIUST as a national strategic initiative to serve as one of the key platforms for transforming Botswana's economy from resource-based to a knowledge-based economy is realised

through skills capacity in Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) field," he said.

The SSU is properly aligned with the BIUST strategy. The two main core services that would be provided by the SSU are identified as follows: Consulting Services on Different Statistical Issues and General Training Services through Short Courses. This project will also serve as another platform for skills sharing to address any existing knowledge gap that will benefit the nation in resolving global challenges facing society. "We are here to serve you, BIUST driving change," he concluded.

The guest speaker, Chief Financial Officer, Bank of Botswana, and Chairperson of the Dept. Industrial Advisory Board Mr. Daniel Loeto applauded everyone who worked tirelessly to ensure that the Statistical Services Unit is initiated specifically the BIUST Department of Mathematics and Statistical Sciences. He further stated that the initiative came at a pivotal time as services found within the program could assist in the ongoing Botswana population census. "Each one of us is asked to participate in creating a statistical profile of Botswana by giving information about ourselves, our families, income, and residence. The information collected is going to be of immense importance to everybody, including statisticians going forward," Mr. Loeto emphasized.

He further stated that the SSU would be beneficial to diverse sectors including; insurance companies, Pension funds industry, Portfolio management, risk management and quality testing. "A properly applied statistical procedure is only as accurate as the data, or facts on which it is based."

In concluding his speech, he said, "It is my sincere hope that the Statistical Services Unit we are launching today will go a long way in ensuring that the University and those that the Unit intends to serve get the full benefits that could be derived from the correct interpretation and use of statistics."

"If you can't measure it, then you can't manage it," said Mr. Robert Selato, Manager, Research, Monitoring and Evaluation, National AIDS & Health Promotion Agency (NAHPA) as he opened his keynote address. According to Mr. Selato, this phrase simply emphasises

the need for data to inform action in a Knowledge-Based Economy as alluded to by the theme of the event. "Statistics form the basis for informed" he cemented.

Before diving deep into his speech Mr.Selato applauded BIUST for instigating a project of this magnitude, a Unit that allows for collaboration with government and other sectors. He further stipulated that there was a need to develop Botswana-specific models that use localised assumptions instead of international models that tend to over-estimate or under-estimate our figures. "This requires good collaborations between the University experts and us the service users," he said.

Adding that "As part of giving back to the community or a project collaboration this unit should strive to close existing knowledge and service gaps and jointly develop such Botswana-based models." He further explained that there was a need for more Botswana to be capacitated in the use of Statistical packages for analysing data, hence opportunities to collaborate on such capacity-building initiatives.

"Let me thank and congratulate BIUST for this initiative which will go a long way in benefiting Botswana and most importantly informing our knowledge-based economy and ensuring a sustainable development."

Deliberating on his presentation, BIUST Senior Lecturer, Mathematics and Statistical Sciences, Dr. Lesego Gabaitiri delineated that this paramount service stands to serve as a capacity-building mechanism to help address the challenges identified within the BIUST community, Botswana parastatals, companies and communities at large as highlighted by the acting

VC in his opening remarks. The service will address challenges such as deficiency in statistical literacy, deficiency in statistical computing skills, and inadequate knowledge of appropriate data or type of statistical analysis to be used or deployed. According to Dr. Gabaitiri, SSU operational hierarchy has an SSU coordinator followed by faculty members/experts.

Dr. Gabaitiri further stated that the service encompasses consulting services on different statistical aspects of research projects covering; Statistical analyses,

Collaboration work, Proper data application, and general training services in a form of/specifically short-course training. Consulting services for the SSU are available to BIUST students, faculty members, university services, and the wider Botswana community. He concluded by stating that SSU Consultation fee; Initial consultation will normally be free for all clients, thereafter, any consultation services offered by the SSU will be charged on a negotiable contract basis.

In closing, Prof. Jean Baptise Gatsinzi of the Department of Mathematics and Statistical Sciences, on behalf of the Dean of the Faculty of Sciences, advised the SSU team to pay heed to Mr. Robert Selato's plea for them to explore diverse models that are available out there. "The public university must point out the use of data models," he emphasised. Prof. Gatsinzi thanked the BIUST Vice Chancellor (in absentia), DVCs and the audience. "Were it not for COVID protocols we would cut a ribbon and tour the SSU labs," he concluded.

LEBELE ADVOCATES FOR LIBRARIES IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



By: Wandipa Gachala

On February 23rd – 6th March 2022, BIUST Library Services Director, Dr. Ayanda A.B. Lebele set on a mission to Kigali, Rwanda on multiple library outreach and advocacy for libraries in sustainable development.

Dr Lebele is a proficient, devoted advocate for equitable access to information for teaching, learning, and research. She is currently the Vice Chairperson for the Sub-Saharan IFLA Regional Division Committee. In this position, her role is to advocate for libraries as core to development in the region; to position libraries as safe spaces for lifelong learning. She promotes IFLA's work in response to the needs of library professionals and users.

The action plans she delivers have a strong focus on the advocacy priorities; building the capacity of librarians across the region; and presenting a stronger voice and presence of IFLA within the region and globally.

Dr Lebele has grown into an internationally recognized strong advocate of transformative library services. She networks at the country level through the membership of the Palapye Librarians Forum & The Botswana Library Association (BLA) and international ones such as the Library & Information Association of South Africa (LIASA)

Her networks, qualifications, and experience enable her to navigate the library advocacy terrain. She holds a Ph.D. in Library and Information Science from the University of South Africa (UNISA); two masters qualifications from the University of Botswana (UB):

one in Library and Information Science; and another in Development Studies. She also has BA in Humanities and a secondary school teaching diploma. This litany of medals demonstrates Lebele's appetite for continued professional development. She has almost 30 years of librarianship experience with a notable footprint in school, public, special, and academic libraries of varied sizes and administrative makeup. Her passion to learn from service also landed her as a yearlong volunteer at the African Union Library, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Dr Lebele's scholarly work is mainly informed by her participatory observations in the interdisciplinary librarianship. She has engaged in different professional platforms about informatics, internet governance; stakeholder engagement; Institutional repositories, and library service provision during the COVID -19 pandemic.

The United Nations Economic Commission of Africa (ECA) and the Rwanda Government hosted the UN Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development (ARFSD) in collaboration with the African Union Commission, the African Development Bank, and other entities of the United Nations System.

Dr Lebele was tasked to dialogue and engage alongside the just noted UN Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development. She was very instrumental in bringing librarians in Rwanda into the global advocacy platform and advocating for recognition of the role of libraries in the attainment of both the SDGs and Agenda 2063.



BIUST, SANSA FORGE RELATIONSHIP

By: Wandipa Gachala

The Botswana International University of Science & Technology (BIUST) forges relations with relevant entities locally and internationally in a quest to drive the country's developments. In its endeavor, BIUST has partnered with the South African National Space Agency (SANSA) to locate a weather station/observatory in BIUST.

SANSA aims to promote the use of space and strengthen cooperation in space-related activities while fostering research in space science, advancing scientific engineering through developing human capital, and supporting industrial development in space technologies.

On the 15th of March 2022, the SANSA team visited BIUST to install a ground-based GPS receiver antenna and acquisition system. The two-day visitation kicked off with a meet and greet session led by the BIUST Vice Chancellor, Prof Otlogetswe Totolo. He expressed his appreciation to the SANSA team for finding BIUST worthy of this partnership. Totolo described this collaboration as a beginning of a fruitful relationship, adding that he was elated to host the team.

For his part SANSA, Business Development, and Stakeholder Practitioner, Mr Jean Kobus Van Zyl articulated his gratitude to the BIUST management for coming on board. He noted that the meeting was an opportunity to map other areas of collaboration between the two entities. Jean attributed the success of the partnership

to his team members Mr Jon Ward, and Mr Emmanuel Nahayo who were in attendance.

By hosting this instrument, BIUST will benefit from the collaboration on space and atmospheric research. It will also expand its graduate training to space science research. The data generated from the instrument will provide surface pressure temperature, ionosphere, and tropospheric path and phase delays. The pressure and temperature measurement along with the tropospheric delay can be used to retrieve water vapor distribution in the troposphere over Botswana.

The ionospheric path and phase delay information from the ground-based GPS receivers will be used to determine the electron content and electron content disturbance due to geomagnetic and solar activities in the region. The disturbance due to geomagnetic and solar activities disrupts radio wave communication and positioning errors. Modern society cannot afford the loss of communication and positioning errors as most business, and navigation system depends on them. To alleviate these problems, a space weather forecast is needed. Space weather forecast is at an infant stage in Africa while it has become an integral part of the western world. In this regard South Africa is leading the continent through efforts at SANSA, Therefore the installation of the facility at BIUST allows Botswana to be part of this rare scientific community.

BIUST, MOPAGPA AGREEMENT AIMS AT POVERTY ERADICATION

By: Gofaone Motswagole

Botswana International University of Science and Technology (BIUST), and the Ministry of Presidential Affairs, Governance and Public Administration (MOPAGPA) signed a Memorandum of Understanding at an event held at the BIUST Campus recently.

In his welcome remarks, Assistant Minister of Tertiary Education, Research, Science and Technology (MOTE), Honourable Mr Aubrey Lesaso, expressed delight that his ministry was joining hands with MOPAGPA through BIUST. The tripartite partnership aims to facilitate and advance the spirit of Government in creating an enabling environment for Botswana to thrive and succeed in their efforts to make a decent living for themselves.

"I must hasten to add that this effort extends the aspirations of our nation as espoused in the National Vision 2036. I treat this vision as a true demonstration of an ambitious statement of intent by the Government, to create a truly inclusive society that accords every individual the dignity and quality of life we all aspire to enjoy," the assistant minister noted.

He said the MoU will facilitate the expansion of the scope of engagement beyond the sunflower project, particularly aimed at establishing a cooperative framework that can support the Government's effort in poverty eradication across the country.

Honourable Lesaso labelled poverty eradication as a matter of concern to the Government of Botswana from time immemorial. He noted it continued to be a topic of interest because of the observable trends globally which point to the imbalance of wealth between nations and people. The minister cautioned that until and unless Botswana bridges the gap between this divide, the effort to create a truly economically inclusive society would remain but a pie in the sky.

For his part, the BIUST Vice Chancellor, Professor Otlogetswe Totolo, highlighted that BIUST aims to increase competitiveness, economic growth, and sustainable development, stimulate research, innovation, and technology transfer, and be a more competitive and innovative tertiary education sector.

"We are happy to be joining hands with MOPAGPA as BIUST to assist the poverty eradication programme in the project of sunflower refining facilities. This is a clear demonstration that BIUST is making an impact on the economic and social development of this country," Professor Totolo said.

The Vice-Chancellor emphasized that the university was forging ahead and moving toward the commercialization of some of the cutting-edge research projects. Professor Totolo affirmed that BIUST has registered an Enterprise Limited to assist in the commercialization, as well as generate third stream income to lessen dependence on Government revenue. The Permanent Secretary for Presidential Affairs, Governance and Public Administration, Mr Montshiwa Montshiwa, asserted that his office was working closely with BIUST to support and make changes to the lives of Botswana.

Mr Montshiwa mentioned that MOPAGPA and BIUST signed on to strengthen their partnership and promote cooperatives around the context of the global development agenda and other specified goals. "Therefore, we are signing a new MoU in the context of the Sustainable Development Agenda and Social Relevance," he said.

The Permanent Secretary also noted that it was in the interest of the MOPAGPA and BIUST to redefine and update the key areas of their cooperation in the light of past experiences but also for the future.

When delivering his keynote address, Assistant Minister for Presidential Affairs Government and Public Administration, Honourable Dumezweni Meshack Mthimkhulu indicated that it was a great honor for him to officiate the important event of the signing of the MoU between MOPAGPA and BIUST.

"Ladies and gentlemen this collaboration was brought about by the need to infuse science and technology in the development of existing and new products for the Poverty Eradication Programme. As you may be aware, the Programme is aimed at uplifting the lives of the poor through the establishment of sustainable income generating project," the Assistant Minister declared.

"In a nutshell, the objective of this MoU is, therefore, to establish a framework in which participants will collaborate towards the fulfillment of their respective mandates by engaging in collaborative science, engineering, and technology research-based programmes that will occur within the context of the regulations and policies of each institution," Honourable Mthimkhulu said.

He added that the new collaboration between his Ministry and BIUST, will include but not limited to mutual research ventures in innovation, technology transfer

and commercialization, joint project identification and sourcing of funds where necessary, and the joint organization of seminars, conferences, public lectures, quality assurance and benchmarking. Other aspects of the agreement include the exchange of staff, students, research results, publications, academic materials, and other information.

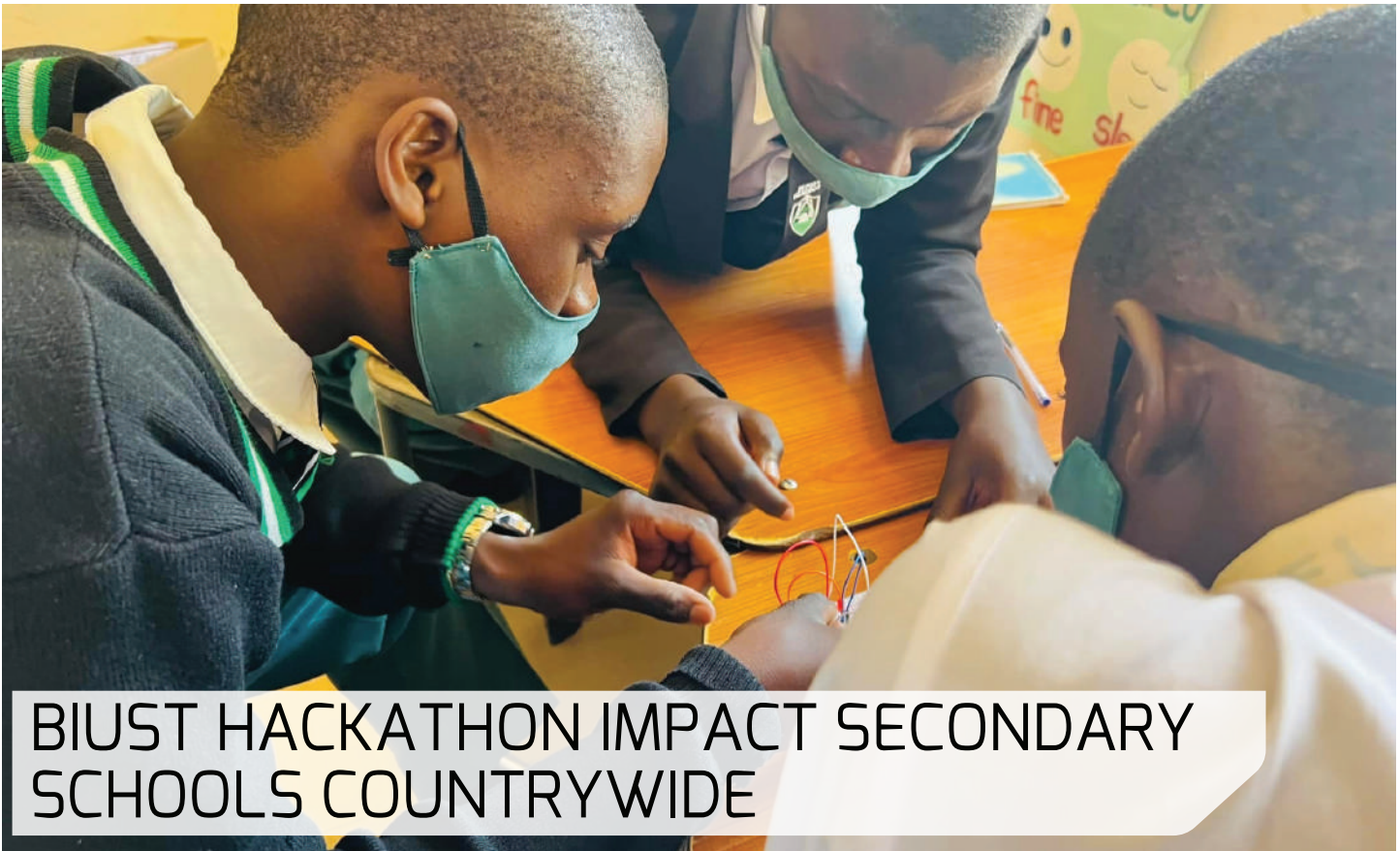
“It is therefore quite fitting that the two institutions should collaborate more formally in the development of value-adding products that will not only boost local economies but also assist the Government in significantly reducing the import bill”, said the Honourable.

Furthermore, he pointed out that intensifying the use of science and technology is expected to not only create employment for Poverty Eradication beneficiaries but also provide them with artisanal skills. “This would also go a long way in fulfilling the country’s aspirations to be a knowledge-based economy, as announced by His Excellency the President during his inauguration,” cited the Assistant Minister.

Honorable Mthimkhulu thanked the BIUST team for affording Government the opportunity of collaboration and expressed that he is confident that the team of experts assembled to implement this agreement will make us all proud.

When closing the event, the Member of Parliament for Palapye, Honorable Onneetse Ramogapi expressed his sincere gratitude to all the delegations for their kind support and commitment to quality. He continued to categorize BIUST as a high-ranking university in major research projects.

Honourable Ramogapi pointed out projects like Drones for Health, which brought a big impact in Palapye and other local authorities. ‘BIUST is relevant to issues of technology, plus its learning outcome is relevant to industry needs,’ the legislator said.



BIUST HACKATHON IMPACT SECONDARY SCHOOLS COUNTRYWIDE

A team of scientists and engineers from the Botswana International Science and Technology (BIUST), led by Project Team Leader and the Director for Pre-University Academic Programme (PUAP) and Dr Haniso Motlhabane have traversed the length and breadth of the county training secondary school students on the use of ICT technology to resolve challenges facing communities in which they live. This is aimed at drilling students at an infant stage to transform the economy from a resource-based to a knowledge-based economy later in life.

These community challenges include not limited to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, crime prevention, and innovation using Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS). The BIUST academics team led by Dr Boyce Sigweni, comprised of Mr. Ontiretse Bagwasi, Dr. Thabo Semong, Mr. B. Nyoni, and Dr. M. Mangwala who popularised the Hackathon to prospective students.

Hackathons popularly known as makers are rapidly growing in popularity. They are still in the infancy stage in terms of mass adoption and usage in Botswana, but

makers have already broken through rigid traditional barriers in industries which otherwise seemed impenetrable by similar technological innovations. Innovations that are in domains such as medical deliveries, goods logistics and deliveries, shopping, precision farming,

lwildlife monitoring, law enforcement, industry, mining, military, environment monitoring, and land surveys. Even though the worldwide Hackathons industry is vibrant and well accepted across application domains, this is not the case in Botswana.

HACKATHON SECONDARY SCHOOLS IMPACTED

Region	Primary Schools	Junior Secondary School	Senior Secondary School	Total
Selebi- Phikwe	3	3	3	9
Francistown	3	5	4	12
Boteti	3	4	2	9
Chobe	6	1	1	8
Maun Shakawe	2	5	1	8
Gantsi & Kgalagadi Boteti	5	3	1	9
Kgalagadi & Gaborone	2	5	4	11
Gaborone and Mahalapye	2	5	3	10
Total	26	31	19	76

Hackathon impacted 76 participating secondary schools and students across the county to find innovative solutions to challenges facing society using ideas and technology. The Hackathon programme will be sustained

during the Strategic planning period 2019-2023, coordinated by the Pre-University Academic Programme (PUAP) in Partnership with the Ministry of Tertiary Education Research, Science & Technology.

BASIS: Change Management Team Undertakes Departmental Visits

By Gofaone Motswagole

BIUST Academic Student Information System (BASIS) project was launched in October 2020, and it is expected to be complete in June 2022 with an open day dubbed 'BASIS Day'. The movement is pioneered by the Director for Registry Services, Dr Donah Lekwati who serves as the Change Manager.

BASIS Change Management Team conducted departmental visits to address the readiness of the project to their colleagues. The team also wanted to make sure other departments were adopting their work. The visitations started in the last week of March and are still ongoing. The next phase is to visit Faculty Boards to interact with academic staff.

In addition, the target audiences for this agenda were the Management and Senior officials who are to assume user roles on BASIS. So far, areas visited by the Change Agents were Registry Services, Student Affairs, and Financial Services departments.

As they were moving around, the agents' focus was the experience from the ongoing User Acceptance

Testing (UAT), gaps identified, and the plan to address them. Other topical issues discussed were the views on the effectiveness and visibility of the system.

Furthermore, one of the Change Agents, Ms Onnalenna Leboane highlighted that the visits proved a success with vital feedback of satisfaction that the departments were gearing up for BASIS. Ms Leboane said there were a few challenges with the User Acceptance Testing (UAT), hence the need to ramp up student awareness in terms of engagements.

Speaking to this publication, Dr Lekwati emphasized that the project is a big initiative, which requires full cooperation from all the departments. He also reminded the BIUST family that the success of this milestone would enhance the institution's reputation and brand.

"Let us prepare for the critical next stage of this project, which is the training. Without our active interest and participation, the training objectives will not be met, and we will not enjoy the system," the dedicated Manager said in encouragement.